



American Academy of Periodontology

Suite 800 • 737 N. Michigan Avenue • Chicago, Illinois 60611-6660
(312) 787-5518 • Fax (312) 787-3670 • www.perio.org

May 14, 2024

The Honorable Christina Henderson
Chair, Committee on Health
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 402, NW
Washington, DC 20004

RE: Opposition to B25-0632, the Dental Specialties Licensure and Scope of Practice Amendment Act

Dear Chair Henderson,

On behalf of the American Academy of Periodontology (AAP), I am writing in opposition to B25-0632, the Dental Specialties Licensure and Scope of Practice Amendment Act. **If passed, this bill would significantly diminish patients' access to dental care and endanger patient health in the District of Columbia.** The AAP represents more than 7,000 periodontists, dental specialists who are committed to delivering the highest standards of periodontal care to patients. Periodontists are experts in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases affecting the gums and supporting the structures of the teeth, and the placement of dental implants.

The AAP is specifically concerned with Section 508c of B25-0632 which would require dental specialists to obtain licensure for specialized dental practice as well as secure diplomate status from one of the 12 dental specialty certifying boards to be eligible for such licensure. This provision will negatively impact the current and future DC dental workforce since many dental specialists who have the requisite training to successfully treat patients but are not board-certified may consider no longer practicing within the District. As this legislation may alter the concentration of dental specialists in the DC area, patients may face access-to-care issues or forgo treatment altogether, resulting in poor oral health outcomes and compromising overall health.

In addition, this legislation adds an administrative burden on dental specialists in the District who are board certified since it requires them to acquire an extra license.

For these aforementioned reasons, we strongly oppose the proposed legislation. Members of the AAP are committed to providing the best possible periodontal care to patients. Mandating a specialized dental license contingent upon board certification will present workforce challenges, add administrative burden, and potentially put patients at risk. Please consider a different licensure approach that takes into consideration the larger dental specialist community and the unique, time-sensitive needs of their patients. Please contact Steven Aspacher, Senior Manager, Member Programs and Communications, at steven@perio.org or (312) 787-3217 for additional information.

Sincerely,

Stephen Meraw, DDS, MS
President, American Academy of Periodontology



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CC:

Chairman Phil Mendelson
Councilmembers of the Committee on Health